



Application Guidelines



About the Program

The National Park Service (NPS) manages some of our nation's most historic sites, scenic resources, and critical natural areas. NPS also provides assistance to locally-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects through the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program. RTCA staff work in urban, rural, and suburban communities to help applicants to conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. Our staff help on a variety of natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects including multi-use trails, single-purpose trails, greenways, water trails (also called blueways), river corridor conservation, land protection, and park planning.

RTCA staff help with partnership-building to achieve community-set goals, organizational development, assessing resources, developing concept plans, public education and participation, and identifying potential sources of funding. The project applicant may be a state or local agency, tribe, non-profit organization, or citizens' group. Federal agencies, including the National Park Service, may apply only in collaboration with a non-federal partner. RTCA does not provide financial assistance to support project implementation.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their project with RTCA staff before sending in an application. It can be helpful to schedule an advance field visit by our staff to best understand how RTCA can be of assistance.

Please return your completed application to the Program Leader for the region in which your project is located. Contact information is available under "Contact Us" on our website. You may also contact Charlie Stockman, NPS RTCA Chief (Acting), at 202-354-6900.

For further information about RTCA and the work we are doing around the country with nearly 300 communities, please visit our national web site at <http://www.nps.gov/rtca>.

Project Selection Criteria

Please make applications brief (generally no more than 3 pages, see attached application form). Applications are evaluated according to the following criteria (questions 1-5 on the application):

1. The project has specific, partner- defined goals and tangible conservation or outdoor recreation results expected in the near future.
2. The project protects or improves important natural resources or enhances outdoor recreation opportunities.
3. Roles and contributions of project partners are substantive and well- defined.
4. There is evidence of broad community support for the project.
5. The anticipated role for RTCA is clearly stated and is appropriate.

Questions 6-10 on the application provide background information to allow us to better understand your project.

In evaluating applications, preference will be given to projects that:

- a. provide physical connections among resources, including connecting communities to parks;
- b. include both natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation;
- c. partner with an NPS area;
- d. partner with a health organization.

Projects should include significant community involvement and outreach, and should also include the commitment, cooperation, and cost- sharing of all partners. Because partnerships are key to the success of community- based projects, we strongly encourage the inclusion of support letters with your application.

Applications are due by **August 1st** for assistance beginning the following fiscal year (October 1st through September 30th). Assistance is for one year, and may be renewed for a second year upon request. Project selection is generally announced in early November after passage of the federal budget.



Application for NPS RTCA Assistance

Please include:

Applicant Information

What is the project name and location? Please include city, county, state, and congressional district.

Who is the applicant(s)? Please include a primary contact, title, address, email, daytime phone, and fax.

Project Description

1. Describe the project goals, including any tangible conservation or outdoor recreation results expected (e.g.: miles of river protected, restored or enhanced; miles of publicly accessible trail created or enhanced; acres of parkland created.)
2. Identify the important natural resources to be improved or protected, and/or the outdoor recreation opportunities to be enhanced.
3. Identify the partners that will be *actively* and *substantively* involved in the project. Describe the existing or anticipated role and contribution of each. *Support letters from project partners detailing the nature of their intended involvement are strongly encouraged.*
4. Provide other examples of support for the project including: recognition in local, regional and state plans; endorsements from elected officials and boards; supportive public votes or surveys; grants and other funds awarded; or media coverage.
5. Describe the kind of assistance you are seeking from RTCA staff. *(For examples of the kinds of technical assistance RTCA staff can provide, click on "What we do" on our website, www.nps.gov/rtca).*

Project Background and Context

6. Provide a map showing the project location. *Briefly* summarize the area's relevant natural, cultural, historic, scenic, and outdoor recreational resources.
7. Describe how the project provides physical connections to and/or enhances other natural/cultural/recreational resources in the region.
8. Describe public participation in the project so far, and any future plans.
9. Outline the history and prior activity on the project (if any) and its current status. (If known), what is the expected completion date of the project?
10. Which aspects of your project are going well? Where does your project need the most help?

Regional RTCA Contact Information

Alaska Region

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National Park Service
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Midwest Region

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Southeast Region

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National Office

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